

Among others in this occupational grouping, median annual earnings in 1998 for those working full time were \$18,470 for barbers; \$13,490 for manicurists; and \$12,570 for shampooers. These numbers exclude tips.

A number of factors determine the total income for barbers and cosmetologists, including the size and location of the salon, the number of hours worked, customers' tipping habits, and the competition from other barber shops and salons. A cosmetologist's or barber's initiative and ability to attract and hold regular customers also are key factors in determining their earnings. Earnings for entry-level workers are usually low; however, for those who stay in the profession, earnings can be considerably higher.

Although some salons offer paid vacations and medical benefits, many self-employed and part-time workers in this occupation do not enjoy such common benefits.

### Related Occupations

Other workers whose main activity consists of improving a patron's personal appearance include beauty consultants and make-up and wig specialists. Other related workers are employed in the beauty salon industry as instructors, beauty supply distributors, and salon managers.

### Sources of Additional Information

A list of licensed training schools and licensing requirements for cosmetologists can be obtained from:

✦ National Accrediting Commission of Cosmetology Arts and Sciences, 901 North Stuart St., Suite 900, Arlington, VA 22203-1816. Internet: <http://www.naccas.org>

Information about a career in cosmetology is available from:

✦ National Cosmetology Association, 401 N. Michigan Ave., 22<sup>nd</sup> floor, Chicago, IL 60611. Internet: <http://www.nca-now.com>

For details on State licensing requirements and approved barber or cosmetology schools, contact the State board of barber examiners or the State board of cosmetology in your State capital.

## Flight Attendants

(O\*NET 68026)

### Significant Points

- Job duties are learned through intensive formal training after being hired.
- The opportunity for travel attracts many to this career, but the job requires working nights, weekends, and holidays and frequently being away from home.

### Nature of the Work

Major airlines are required by law to provide flight attendants for the safety of the flying public. Although the primary job of the flight attendants is to ensure that safety regulations are adhered to, they also try to make flights comfortable and enjoyable for passengers.

At least 1 hour before each flight, flight attendants are briefed by the captain, the pilot in command, on such things as emergency evacuation procedures, crew coordination, length of flights, expected weather conditions, and special passenger problems. Flight attendants make sure that first aid kits and other emergency equipment are aboard and in working order and that the passenger cabin is in order, with adequate supplies of food, beverages, and blankets. As passengers board the plane, flight attendants greet them, check their tickets, and instruct them on where to store coats and carry-on items.

Before the plane takes off, flight attendants instruct all passengers in the use of emergency equipment and check to see that seat belts are fastened, seat backs are in upright positions, and all carry-on items are properly stowed. In the air, helping passengers in the event of an emergency is the most important responsibility of a flight attendant. Safety-related actions may range from reassuring passengers during

occasional encounters with strong turbulence to directing passengers who must evacuate a plane following an emergency landing. Flight attendants also answer questions about the flight; distribute reading material, pillows, and blankets; and help small children, elderly or disabled persons, and any others needing assistance. They may administer first aid to passengers who become ill. Flight attendants generally serve beverages and other refreshments and, on many flights, heat and distribute precooked meals or snacks. After the plane has landed, flight attendants take inventory of headsets, alcoholic beverages, and moneys collected. They also report any medical problems passengers may have had, and the condition of cabin equipment.

Lead or first flight attendants, sometimes known as pursers, oversee the work of the other attendants aboard the aircraft, while performing most of the same duties.

### Working Conditions

Since airlines operate around the clock year round, flight attendants may work nights, holidays, and weekends. They usually fly 75 to 85 hours a month and, in addition generally spend about 75 to 85 hours a month on the ground preparing planes for flights, writing reports following completed flights, and waiting for planes to arrive. Because of variations in scheduling and limitations on flying time, many flight attendants have 11 or more days off each month. They may be away from their home base at least one-third of the time. During this period, the airlines provide hotel accommodations and an allowance for meal expenses.

The combination of free time and discount air fares provides flight attendants the opportunity to travel and see new places. However, the work can be strenuous and trying. Short flights require speedy service if meals are served and turbulent flights can make serving drinks and meals difficult. Flight attendants stand during much of the flight and must remain pleasant and efficient regardless of how tired they are or how demanding passengers may be. Occasionally, flight attendants must deal with disruptive passengers.

Flight attendants are susceptible to injuries because of the job demands in a moving aircraft. Back injuries and mishaps opening overhead compartments are common. In addition, medical problems can occur from irregular sleeping and eating patterns, dealing with stressful passengers, working in a pressurized environment, and breathing recycled air.

### Employment

Flight attendants held about 99,000 jobs in 1998. Commercial airlines employed the vast majority of all flight attendants, most of whom live in the major city that is the airlines' home base. A small number of flight attendants worked for large companies that operated company aircraft for business purposes.



*Flight attendants serve beverages and meals.*

### Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Airlines prefer to hire poised, tactful, and resourceful people who can interact comfortably with strangers and remain calm under duress. Applicants usually must be at least 18 to 21 years old. Flight attendants must have excellent health and the ability to speak clearly. In addition, there generally are height requirements and most airlines want candidates with weight proportionate to height.

Prospective flight attendants usually must be willing to relocate, although some flight attendants are able to commute to and from their home base. Applicants must be high school graduates. Those having several years of college or experience in dealing with the public are preferred. More and more flight attendants being hired are college graduates. Highly desirable areas of concentration include such people oriented disciplines as psychology and education. Flight attendants for international airlines generally must speak an appropriate foreign language fluently. Some of the major airlines prefer candidates who can speak two major foreign languages for their international flights.

Once hired, candidates must undergo a period of training. The length of training depends on the size and type of carrier, ranging from 4 to 7 weeks, and takes place in the airline's flight training center. Airlines that do not operate training centers generally send new employees to the center of another airline. Airlines may provide transportation to the training centers and an allowance for board, room, and school supplies. However, new trainees are not considered employees of the airline until they successfully complete the training program. Some airlines may actually charge individuals for training. Trainees learn emergency procedures such as evacuating an airplane, operating emergency systems and equipment, administering first aid, and water survival tactics. In addition, trainees are taught how to deal with disruptive passengers and hijacking and terrorist situations. New hires learn flight regulations and duties, company operations and policies, and receive instruction on personal grooming and weight control. Trainees for the international routes get additional instruction in passport and customs regulations. Towards the end of their training, students go on practice flights. Additionally, flight attendants must receive 12 to 14 hours of annual training in emergency procedures and passenger relations.

After completing initial training, flight attendants are assigned to one of their airline's bases. New flight attendants are placed on "reserve status" and are called on either to staff extra flights or fill in for crew members who are sick or on vacation or rerouted. When not on duty, reserve flight attendants must be available to report for flights on short notice. They usually remain on reserve for at least 1 year, but in some cities it may take 5 to 10 years or longer to advance from reserve status. Flight attendants who no longer are on reserve bid monthly for regular assignments. Because assignments are based on seniority, usually only the most experienced attendants get their choice of assignments. Advancement takes longer today than in the past because experienced flight attendants are remaining in this career longer than they used to.

Some flight attendants become supervisors, or take on additional duties such as recruiting and instructing.

### Job Outlook

Opportunities should be favorable for persons seeking flight attendant jobs because the number of applicants is expected to be roughly the same as the number of job openings. Those with at least 2 years of college and experience in dealing with the public should have the best chance of being hired.

As airline restrictions on employment have been abolished, turnover—which traditionally was very high—has declined. Nevertheless, the majority of job openings through the year 2008 should be due to the need to replace flight attendants who transfer to other occupations or who leave the labor force. Many flight attendants are attracted to the occupation by the glamour of the airline industry and the opportunity to travel, but some eventually leave in search of jobs that offer higher earnings and require fewer nights away from their families.

Employment of flight attendants is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2008. Growth in population and income is expected to increase the number of airline passengers. Airlines enlarge their capacity by increasing the number and size of planes in operation. Since Federal Aviation Administration safety rules require one attendant for every 50 seats, more flight attendants will be needed.

Employment of flight attendants is sensitive to cyclical swings in the economy. During recessions, when the demand for air travel declines, many flight attendants are put on part-time status or laid off. Until demand increases, few new flight attendants are hired.

### Earnings

According to data from the Association of Flight Attendants, beginning flight attendants had median earnings of about \$13,700 a year in 1998. Flight attendants with 6 years of experience had median annual earnings of about \$20,000, while some senior flight attendants earned as much as \$50,000 a year.

Beginning pay scales for flight attendants vary by carrier. New hires usually begin at the same pay scale regardless of experience, and all flight attendants receive the same future pay increases. Flight attendants receive extra compensation for night and international flights and for increased hours. In addition, some airlines offer incentive pay for working holidays or taking positions that require additional responsibility or paper work. Most airlines guarantee a minimum of 65 to 75 flight hours per month, with the option to work additional hours. Flight attendants also receive a "per diem" allowance for meal expenses while on duty away from home. In addition, flight attendants and their immediate families are entitled to free fares on their own airline and reduced fares on most other airlines.

Flight attendants are required to purchase uniforms and wear them while on duty. The airlines usually pay for uniform replacement items, and may provide a small allowance to cover cleaning and upkeep of the uniforms.

The majority of flight attendants hold union membership, primarily with the Association of Flight Attendants. Others may be members of the Transport Workers Union of America, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, or other unions.

### Related Occupations

Other jobs that involve helping people as a safety professional while requiring the ability to be calm even under trying circumstances include emergency medical technician, firefighter, maritime crew, and camp counselor.

### Sources of Additional Information

Information about job opportunities and the qualifications required for a particular airline may be obtained by writing to the airline's personnel office.

## Home Health and Personal Care Aides

(O\*NET 66011 and 68035)

### Significant Points

- Numerous job openings will result due to very fast employment growth and very high turnover.
- Education required for entry-level jobs is generally minimal, but earnings are low.

### Nature of the Work

Home health and personal care aides help elderly, disabled, and ill persons live in their own homes instead of in a health facility. Most